Welcome to Story Station U on 89-3 WGSU, Geneseo's Voice of the Valley, your local radio broadcast where campus life meets American headlines! I'm your host, Madilyn Becker, and I'll be breaking down the recent news that could change your weekend plans- or maybe your future! Don't forget: you can follow along with tonight's script and read all of my sources online at the WGSU website!

Thank you for spending part of your evening with me and listening to Story Station U! If you have any thoughts on the show, questions you've been wanting to ask me, or headlines you want me to cover, send me an email! Email me at storystationu@gmail.com to get in touch! Again, that's ''story station, with a lowercase letter u'' at gmail.com. I would love to hear from you!

Our first headline tonight is one that has colleges and universities across the country buzzing. On March 8th, President Trump pulled $400 million dollars of federal funding from Columbia University in New York, and placed other public and private institutions on a list of schools that may see the same fate. Columbia University, and these other institutions, have been criticized by the Department of Justice for failing to protect Jewish students and faculty. These other institutions listed include Harvard, George Washington University, New York University, Northwestern University, The University of California, Berkeley, among others, according to the New York Times. The reason cited for the defunding of Columbia is pro-Palestinian protests on campus, both at Columbia University and Barnard College, a partner-school to Columbia. President Trump, earlier in his presidency, vowed to combat antisemitic protests and environments at "leftists" institutions. However, faculty at many of the criticized universities and colleges have spoken out against the antisemitic accusations, saying that despite a few Jewish students voicing their concerns of feeling unsafe, the protests were peaceful, with many Jewish students participating themselves. These pro-palestine demonstrations are protests against the Israel-Hamas war. Hamas, or the Islamic Resistance Movement, is an "outgrowth of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood". Hamas further emerged as "a Palestinian 'rejectionist' group (with support from Iran and private Arab sources) by engaging in violent attacks against Israelis". Today, the United States recognizes Hamas as a foreign terrorist organization. The American Jewish Committee recognizes Hamas' killing of Jewish people as antisemitism. "The official mission statement of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations says it 'represents the State of Israel, its citizens and the Jewish people on the world stage", so many view criticism against Israel as antisemitic. However, as Abraham Gutman, a journalist with the Philadelphia Inquirer, also published by NBC News wrote in an article about the Israel-Palestine conflict, "antisemitism predates the state of Israel by about two millennia, and ending the occupation won't make it disappear". He goes on to explain "freedom and safety of Jewish Israelis and and the freedom and safety of Christian and Muslim Palestinians are not mutually exclusive- in fact, they are secured by coexistence". He, along with many other American citizens, argues that protesting against the Israeli government's violent attacks against Palestinains is not inherently antisemitic. President Trump, however, took a more harsh stance against pro-Palestine protests, dedicating a task force to carry out his mandate of defending "leftists" institutions who host such "anti-Jewish", racist demonstrations. He posted on his Truth Social account, that he would be defunding any

school that hosts these "illegal" protests. To save themselves from losing federal funding, some of these universities have already begun hiring lobbyists with connections to the president, rolling back diversity efforts, and cracking down on student-organized protests. While sources are still unclear on what the criteria for being defunded are, many schools, including Harvard University, had been named in a report published last October by the House Committee on Education and the Work Force for allowing antisemitic behavior. Harvard was named for their alleged failure to condemn Hamas attacks on Israel in 2023. Another institute mentioned in both President Trump's list, and the report published by the House Committee is University of California, Berkeley. U.C. Berkeley was criticized for not disciplining students who "took part in encampment or disrupted a talk by an Israeli speaker". This references a protest that took place on UC Berkeley's campus in May of 2024. Students set up a pro-Palestinian encampment demonstration to protest an Isreali speaker at the school, with many students filling the campus for up to three weeks with tents and camping supplies. Recently, Columbia University announced that it is reviewing President Trump's announcement and plans to work with the U.S. government.

Up next tonight is an in-depth look of President Trump's cuts to federal agencies, and their employees. According to CNN and other political data sources, including but not limited to, The New York Times, NBC News, and Politico, over one-hundred thousand employees have been fired from federal agencies as of March 5th, 2025. CNN lists the top five agencies and sub-agencies that have seen the biggest cuts as Housing and Urban Development's Planning and Development agency, the Agency for International Development, the Veterans Affairs agency, the Social Security Administration, and the United States Department of Energy. Combined, these agencies and sub-agencies have seen a loss of over eighty-one thousand employees. This will have an economic impact on every state. While most federal employees are currently listed to be working in or around Washington, D.C., every state in the U.S. is home to some federal employees, also according to CNN. Arielle Pines, who lost her job in the Veterans Affairs agency, told CNN that five people in her office lost their jobs, and they all had spouses who had served in the U.S. military, or had served themselves. One employee who was terminated, according to Pines, had served for eighteen years. Another federal employee who spoke to CNN, Chelsea Milburn, had worked for the Department of Education. She said that she felt like she had received "the message" that her "service isn't valued". Michael Graugnard even told CNN that he voted for President Trump during the 2024 presidential election, but has since lost his federal job due to the administration's cuts. He explained that he supports the vision of increased government efficiency but "didn't vote for it to be implemented in the way" that it is. While hiring rates were consistent with what has been expected and reported by analysts from the Labor Department, unemployment rates increased from 4% to 4.1% and federal employment decreased drastically. Chief global strategist at Principal Asset Management, Seema Shah, warned that "while the worst fears were not met, the report does confirm that the labor market is cooling". She continued to explain, "with no shortage of headwinds confronting the US economy, the softening trend is likely to persist and may potentially deepen given the toxic combination of federal government layoffs, public spending cuts, and tariff uncertainty related inertia". President Trump laid out his plans for the labor

market, saying that it would be “fantastic”, but that it would have to rely on “high-paying manufacturing jobs as opposed to government jobs”.

It’s time for our next story tonight: Democrats and Republicans are dealing with the issue of how to fund the government through September, avoiding a government shutdown. A government shutdown happens when “Congress fails to approve funding or funding extensions for federal agencies and programs”. A republican-backed bill was recently introduced to Congress, aiming to increase defense spending by $6 billion and decrease non-defense spending by $13 billion, compared to in 2024. Part of the spending increase includes over $480 million dollars to Immigrations and Customs Enforcement to increase the numbers of deportations. Today, after a 217-213 vote in the House of Representatives, the bill received exactly the number of votes required, 217, in order to continue onto the Senate. A spending resolution must be achieved in the Senate by March 14th in order to avoid a government shutdown. While democrats worry about being blamed for the shutdown if they don’t agree to the Republican-backed bill, many are not happy with the plans outlined in it. Democrat senator, Cory Booker, called the bill “outrageous”. Despite frustrations from Democrats over the bill, they have yet to lay out their own plans. Senate minority leader for the Democrats, Chuck Schumer, still has not briefed the Democrats’ House minority leader, Hakeem Jefferies, on his plans for a new bill. However, Jefferies did tell reporters that Democrats planned to unanimously vote against the Republican-backed bill. Democrat representative of Massachusetts, Seth Moulton, described a Democrat-backed spending bill as Democrats’ “only leverage” against President Trump and Elon Musk’s plans. On top of the frustrations from Democrats, three Republicans also currently disagree with the bill. This signals a tough fight for current republican Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson, and other House republicans, to pass their spending plans and avoid a shutdown. Republican Committee Chairman, Tom Cole, explained the bill as one that would increase “funding and certainty for the nation”.

Tune into Story Station U each week for continuing updates on all of the headlines that matter to you! Our next headline tonight provides a look into how President Trump’s actions appear to countries outside of the United States. On Sunday, March 9th, 2025, The U.S. was added to a global human rights watchlist. More specifically, our nation was added to the CIVICUS Monitor Watchlist, which is “a research tool that publicizes the status of freedoms and threats to civil liberties worldwide”. “CIVICUS is a global alliance of civil society organisations and activists working to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world”. The organization cites what they describe as President Trump’s “assault on democratic norms and global cooperation”. His elimination of many foreign aid resources, restrictions placed on DEI programs, and other “restrictive executive orders”, were reasons to place the U.S. on this watchlist, according to CIVICUS. Within the watchlist, the U.S. has been placed into the ‘’narrowed’’ category. This category labels countries as places where most citizens are able to exercise their rights of free speech, assembly, and expression, but there are some attempts by the government to limit these rights. The narrowed category is also concerned with citizens and journalists

being able to exercise the right of free press, which has become a hot topic regarding the current presidential administration. A notable example: The Associated Press has sued three individuals in the Trump Administration for unconstitutionally violating their freedom of speech. The lawsuit came after President Trump's Administration team banned some Associated Press reporters from White House news events after they refused to change their wording of The Gulf of Mexico to The Gulf of America after President Trump signed an executive order making the name change official. White House Deputy Press Secretary, Anna Kelly, released a statement earlier today calling the CIVICUS assessment "nonsense", saying that "President Trump is leading the most transparent administration in history". However, CIVICUS states that the United States' new placement on this watchlist means that hard-fought human rights could be reversed and civic freedoms will be further impacted. Now, let's break for a quick message from WGSU.

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Thanks for tuning into Story Station U! For our next story, let's turn to some news a little further away, or, in space to be specific. NASA recently unveiled its newly created space telescope, the SPHEREx, designed to search for key ingredients to life further out in the Milky Way. It will search for evidence of water, carbon dioxide, and carbon monoxide frozen in the galaxy, in hopes that new stars, planets, and possibilities for life can be unearthed. A new sun-focused mission, called PUNCH, was also unveiled. The PUNCH mission involves sending four satellites to our sun, to observe how the sun and its atmosphere impacts space weather. Space weather, according to NASA, affects our life on Earth by creating solar flares, which is the sun's atmosphere disrupting satellites that relay information to Earth and causing power outages. The PUNCH satellites would discover more information about the sun, its atmosphere, and these solar flares. Both NASA missions were originally planned to launch in late February, but weather and a series of engineering issues set the timeline back. Another launch was planned for yesterday, March 10th, but scientists decided that weather was only 20% favorable, so both teams from NASA, and SpaceX, which was to provide the rocket to launch these machines into space, agreed to delay the launch again. NASA and SpaceX report that new opportunities for a successful launch could emerge in April.

Now, Story Station U presents the weekly moment of good news! This week's good news story: The Me2 Orchestra was founded in Boston by Ronald Braunstein in Boston and is helping to reduce stigma around mental health disorders!. He is diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, but says that music is his medicine. Scientific research backs him up: effects of music have been scientifically proven to improve people's lives in ways such as, fighting depression, reducing pain, and lowering blood pressure. Braunstein has had a long, successful career in music, but he discussed how people always say him as "weird", when he experienced manic episodes due to his mental health condition. Eventually, as his disorder progressed, he was fired from a

conducting job and dropped by his music label. Today, he works with the League of American Orchestras. He welcomes musicians to play in his orchestra who have been turned away from other groups due to struggles with their mental health. Caroline Whiddon plays in his orchestra. She was diagnosed with depression, and thought she would never play in a musical performance again. “Ronald gave me back the gift of music”, she explained. The Me2 orchestra performs around six to eight concerts a year, with approximately fifty musicians. Today, Braunstein and Whiddon are married, and they raise money for mental health causes each year with support from over one-hundred donors.

Lastly, I’d like to end tonight’s show by talking about some historical women to honor Women’s History Month. These women were suggested for me to highlight by listeners of Story Station U! If you have an idea for the show, send me an email at storystationu@gmail.com!

Our first historical woman tonight is Suzyn Waldman. She made history as major league baseball’s first female radio broadcaster. In 2022, she was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame for her achievements. Next up: Sojourner Truth. Truth was enslaved from 1797 until 1820. She escaped from her master, and in 1820 when New York’s Anti-Slavery bill was passed, she filed a lawsuit against her former master to get back her son who had been illegally sold. She became the first black woman to sue a white man, and win. She lived on to have a career as an influential civil rights activist and speaker.

That’s our top headlines for tonight, but the world never stops spinning and news never stops breaking, so join me again next Tuesday, same place, same time for all of your top headlines! Don’t forget you can read my script and see all of tonight’s sources on WGSU’s website! And don’t forget, you can email me about all things Story Station U at storystationu@gmail.com! Thank you again for joining me tonight. I’m your host, Madilyn Becker, and I’ll talk to you next week on 89-3 WGSU, Geneseo’s Voice of the Valley!